

A syndicated newspaper article by Alice Widener was based on her earlier story which appeared in U.S.A. magazine under the title "Cigarettes An American Success."

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For Your Information—

Cigarette Diplomacy

By Alice Widener

NEW YORK—It is time for the public to scrutinize wild statements made in a nationwide campaign against American cigarettes and to analyze the motives behind this campaign.

Any observant traveler abroad will tell you that American cigarettes are a total and worldwide success. Furthermore, they are an American commodity of constant and recognized value, as good as gold and in one way even better.

Whether right or wrong, healthy or unhealthy, the fact is that American cigarettes are the only U.S. giveaway sure to make a friend. Anywhere abroad, the gift of a pack of American cigarettes elicits from smokers and non-smokers a sincere "thank you" accompanied by a smile or broad grin.

Today, a lot of inaccurate and false propaganda about American cigarettes is being printed and broadcast because they are a kind of money and the American tobacco companies make a lot of it. Also, a great deal of anti-cigarette propaganda is being put out by a few persons working hard for American failure.

THE CHARGE "cigarettes cause cancer" is widely publicized. Very few Americans know who originally made it and in what publication it was printed. The fact is that in 1953 the May 23 issue of the radical magazine, *The Nation*, carried a feature article "Smoking and Cancer."

Six months later, the socialist magazine "The New Leader" carried a lead article "Cigarettes Cause Cancer" by the same author a widely known physician. All his arguments were reviewed in the official journal of the California Medical Assn. It states that "no scientific data are offered" to support assertions that cigarettes cause lung cancer or any other kind of cancer. Editorially, the Journal of the American Medical Assn. is in agreement.

In all honest talk about cigarettes and health, it is imperative to concede: (1) The cause of cancer in human beings is at present unknown; (2) Excessive smoking, eating and drinking are physically harmful.

It is true that some doctors and scientists have taken concentrated irritants from tobacco, smeared them on the shaven skins of mice and produced cancer on the mice. It is also true that similar treatment with concentrated irritants from sources other than tobacco has caused skin cancer on mice.

The theory that lung cancer is caused by cigarette-smoking is offered on a purely statistical basis. Yet it is a proven fact that though mass cigarette smoking is largely a Twentieth Century habit and the population has grown enormously in this century, the U.S. death rate from lung ailments is about one-seventh of what it was in 1900. Furthermore, half of reported deaths from cancer in the lung or bronchus (only 1.8 per cent of total deaths) show that the disease originated in another part of the body and spread to lung or bronchus.

UNTIL ITS REAL cause and cure are found, there always are all kinds of theories and superstitions about what causes a particular dread disease. Only a few years ago, many reputable doctors and scientists asserted that cigarette-smoking caused tuberculosis. As everybody now knows, this was not so. Though smoking is on the increase, tuberculosis is no longer a major health problem.

No intelligent person will claim that excessive cigarette smoking is physically beneficial. On the other hand, every intelligent person will grant that in this world people are going to indulge in their simple pleasure willy-nilly, some to excess, others in sensible moderation.

Our nation once had prohibition and was nearly wrecked by it. We don't want another prohibition era with cigarette black-marketeers,

bootleggers and smugglers, and with the average decent citizen turned into a lawbreaker.

There is an inordinate amount of irresponsible, prejudiced scare propaganda about cigarette smoking and cancer. Amazingly, this summer, government food inspectors discovered that several tons of live trout from the fresh mountain streams of the Sierra Nevada and other far western mountain ranges were afflicted with cancer. It seems probable that whatever else they do—and who knows exactly what sins they commit or follies they indulge in—mountain trout don't smoke.

WHAT CAUSES CANCER? Cranberries, trout, cigarettes, lipstick? Nobody knows. What causes lung cancer? Nobody knows. Let us pray and work to find out, and let us give generous financial support to reputable scientific and charitable societies trying to find out. The tobacco companies certainly are doing their share. They have appointed a Tobacco Industry Research Committee to sponsor more than \$3,700,000 worth of independent research into heart disease and cancer.

Meantime, we would do well to appreciate the real national and international value of American cigarettes. They are an unqualified success and win friends for us everywhere. They are a tremendous morale booster to members of the armed forces. It would seem wise for all Americans to adopt a common sense let's-have-the-facts-first attitude toward sensational health-news stories.

We had better think things over twice and thrice before permitting anti-capitalist propagandists, health faddists, fanatics and temperance-society prohibitionists to destroy our great American tobacco industry. It creates gainful employment, enriches our entire economy and manufactures the U.S. product that is a total and worldwide success—American cigarettes.

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